

to preserving the sweetheart deal they have in this country, where they have far too many politicians in the Senate and in the House, far too many of our colleagues, who simply, again, over and over and over, do the drug companies' bidding.

Every other developed country in the world, as I said earlier, gets better priced prescription drugs than we do. Every other developed country in the world gets better prices than we do. That is because these countries do not put up with the grossly inflated drug prices our Nation does. It is because their drug company lobbyists or their drug company media campaigns simply may not be as effective in France and Canada and Germany and Israel and Japan and Mexico, and all over the world, where drug prices are a half or a third or a fourth of what they are here.

We will put up with most anything, it seems, if an industry has deep enough pockets and an army of lobbyists. Prohibiting the Government from negotiating volume discounts on prescription drugs simply makes no sense. The Government negotiates the price of everything else it buys.

When the Architect of the Capitol buys carpeting for the Senate floor—as we look around at this very nice blue carpet here—they do not take the manufacturer's word that a fair price would impair fiber research. We do not say whatever the carpet makers want, we will pay because it costs a lot to do this research to make these rugs beautiful and make this carpet last, when so many feet walk over it.

When the Park Service buys ranger uniforms, it does not take the first bid that comes in. It gets good quality at the lowest price possible.

But with drugs, the President and his allies here in Congress—and we know how much money the drug industry gave to President Bush; and we know the kinds of effective lobbying the drug industry employs in the Senate—the President and his allies here in Congress say the Government must pay any price the drug industry wants to charge.

That policy is more than a mistake; it is a joke on the American people. It is a betrayal of our constituents. The drug companies are laughing all the way to the bank.

We need to pass this legislation tomorrow and let Medicare bargain for the prices that Medicare beneficiaries deserve.

#### REMEMBERING FELIX WILLIAM RIVERA

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I rise today to honor the memory of a great Nevada educator and coach, Felix William Rivera. Felix, a physical and health education teacher in the Clark County School District in Las Vegas, NV, was involved in a fatal car accident on February 8, 2007.

Felix proudly lived in the Las Vegas metropolitan area all of his life. He

graduated from Basic High School in 1991 and the University of Nevada, Las Vegas in 1996 with degrees in secondary education and sports medicine and certification in athletic training. As a student teacher, Felix was selected as a Distinguished Student Teacher of the Year Award. He began his teaching career at Swainston Middle School in 1997, and thereafter served as a Physical Education Coach and Athletic Trainer at Western High School and Health Teacher and Athletic Trainer at Desert Pines High School.

Felix went above and beyond his job responsibilities in order to provide students with the opportunity to learn and succeed. He spent countless hours treating students who had limited access to health care. Oftentimes, he would arrive early to school in order to provide treatments, limited therapy, or counseling to students who simply needed a listening ear. Felix had outstanding listening skills and frequently utilized his networking base to connect students with the proper resources. As one of his former students noted, "Not only did Mr. Rivera teach health, he also taught us about life and steps we needed to take in order to become successful." A fellow teacher at Desert Pines High School described him as a "role model for students who took great pride in every lesson that he taught." A teacher and friend further commented on his congenial personality, "He was the kind of person who had an innate ability to get right to the point, an ear-to-ear smile that was contagious and a well-known sense of humor."

It is clear that Felix was a dedicated educator, a role model, and a mentor who left a lasting impression on his students. On April 18, 2007, family, friends, students, and colleagues will honor his legacy by dedicating a mural with the words "hard as steel with a heart of gold" in the training room at Desert Pines High School, where he spent much of his time counseling students. I join in honoring Felix and extend my deepest sympathies to his family and friends, especially his wife and high school sweetheart, Alice "Cookie" Masterson and children, Anthony and Felicia. He is deeply missed and his service and dedication to the students of Clark County will always be greatly appreciated.

#### ARMY MEDICAL DEPARTMENT CENTER AND SCHOOL ACHIEVEMENTS

Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, when I began my chairmanship of the Veterans' Affairs committee this January, I assured my colleagues that we would renew our focus on the need for cooperation and collaboration between the Department of Defense and the Department of Veterans Affairs. As we look at the way these two entities work together, it is important that we highlight the good work and progress being made. One example of progress

and excellence in collaboration can be found at the Army Medical Department Center and School, located at Fort Sam Houston, which trains Army, Air Force, and VA nurses.

This year, U.S. News and World Report ranked the Army Medical Department Center and School second in the Nation for their anesthesia nursing program. They missed first place by just a tenth of one point, and have improved their score from 3.8 out of 5.0 in 2003, to 4.0 out of 5.0 in 2007. This notable achievement brings added credibility to their already prestigious program.

Since 2004, VA and DOD have partnered to train VA nurse anesthetists to work in the VA health care system, the largest health care system in the country. The first class of VA nurse anesthetists recently graduated from the Army Medical Department Center and School. Their graduation represents what I hope will be a steady flow of highly qualified VA nurse anesthetists using their skills and knowledge to give veterans the high-quality health care they have earned through service.

I realize that, with the private sector offering six-figure salaries for nurse anesthetists, those who chose to work within the military and VA do so not for personal gain. They stay to respond to the higher calling of caring for servicemembers and veterans in their times of need, and are to be commended for their dedication and their work. In that spirit, I say 'e ho'omaika'i ia'oukou, or congratulations, to the graduates, students, faculty, staff, and others who have worked to make the Army Medical Department Center and School the success that it is today.

#### RECOGNITION OF CANUTE DALMASSE

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, today I honor Canute Dalmasse of Stowe, VT, who is retiring after 36 years of dedicated service to the State of Vermont, working to conserve, protect, and enhance our State's natural resources. His extraordinary contribution to the stewardship of Vermont's natural environment calls for special recognition.

Canute retires as the deputy secretary of the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources, overseeing fish, wildlife, forests, parks, recreation, and environmental conservation programs and recently served with distinction as acting secretary. His career began in 1971 as one of the first district coordinators implementing Vermont's landmark Act 250 environmental law that uses a holistic approach looking at environmental, visual, and social criteria to assess potential development impacts. A proven leader and innovator, he has served as director of the Office of Water Resources and commissioner of the Department of Environmental Conservation.

Canute is an avid boater and angler on Lake Champlain and an unflinching

advocate for Vermont's waters. He serves on the Lake Champlain Basin Program Steering Committee and as chair of its executive committee, bringing the States of Vermont and New York and the Province of Quebec together to work for a clean, healthy lake. He also serves on the Lake Memphremagog Steering Committee, working with the Province of Quebec to protect and enhance that international water.

Canute received his bachelors degree from Columbia University in New York City and served in the 101st Airborne Division in the U.S. Army during the Vietnam War. He and his wife Diane have two sons, Layton and Canute. He is a longtime resident of Stowe, VT, and is a past president of Stowe Youth Hockey and chair of the Stowe Recreation Commission.

Canute Dalmasse is a tribute to his State, his community, and to protecting Vermont's natural environment. The great State of Vermont, with its celebrated natural beauty and well-deserved reputation for exemplary environmental stewardship, honors Canute's dedication, devotion, and hard work that helped set the course for Vermont's environmental future. It is an honor and a privilege to recognize Canute today in the U.S. Senate.

#### TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY

Mr. BAYH. Mr. President, I wish to speak to legislation to fight a discrepancy in access to care that prevents hundreds of our Nation's heroes from receiving the best possible care for traumatic brain injury.

Traumatic brain injury has been identified as the "signature injury" afflicting armed servicemembers returning from Iraq and Afghanistan. After sacrificing so much, we have a moral obligation to ensure that these men and women receive the best care available to them. Unfortunately, administrative and medical capacity problems have prevented many of our heroes from receiving the care they desperately need and deserve. There is an immediate solution to address this.

The Department of Veterans Affairs, VA, has made clear progress in research and development of rehabilitation treatment for individuals who have incurred traumatic brain injuries. However, VA medical facilities have not yet reached the level of private rehabilitation facilities, which have been developing cognitive treatment for the past 30 years.

While VA medical centers offer excellent services, there are barriers to receiving the optimal health care options. These include a confusing array of benefits, overworked and undertrained case managers, and, most importantly, a discrepancy between benefits for those on active duty versus those who are medically retired. This discrepancy in benefits leads to confusion among families who are forced to try to determine what is in the best in-

terest of the servicemember, often without having full knowledge of the difference in benefits offered to Active Duty and veterans. Currently, the TRICARE plan that is available to Active Duty servicemembers permits them to receive coverage for cognitive therapy obtained in private non-military facilities. However, medical retirees do not have this health care coverage option. Consequently, severely injured TBI patients struggle to obtain the critical care they desperately need.

Further, while many armed servicemembers have dedicated family members and loved ones who fight to ensure that they receive the best care possible, not all servicemembers have family to speak and act on their behalf. Thus, many are left without optimal treatment and without an advocate.

The need to ensure that every TBI patient receives the best care possible cannot be understated. This is an immediate problem with an immediate solution. We have the ability to provide a crucial, temporary answer to our armed services members while the VA develops the capability to facilitate care for this unique population. We can not stand idly by, as hundreds of our bravest Americans are prevented from receiving the care they deserve.

#### HONORING PASTOR RHIO CLEIGH

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, today I take a few minutes to honor a great man of faith. Pastor Rhio Cleigh dedicated the past 25 years to serving his community through the church. The last 15 of those years have been at my home church—Prairie Lakes Church in Cedar Falls, IA.

The work of a pastor is not always easy but, much like my work, it is very rewarding. As a minister in our church, Rhio was responsible for counseling individuals through difficult times, visiting the sick in the hospital, and ministering to the senior citizens of our congregation.

This Sunday our membership will honor Pastor Cleigh as he retires from the ministry. Rhio plans to spend his retirement enjoying time with his wife Patti, his 6 children, 10 grandchildren, and 1 great-grandchild. He also hopes to have a little more time for some of his hobbies—things like woodworking, camping, fishing, and gardening.

Barbara joins me in sincere appreciation to Rhio for his contributions to our church and community. Together we wish him a long and happy retirement.

#### U.S. FOREIGN POLICY AGENDA

Mr. CRAIG. Mr. President, I rise today in support of a sense-of-the-Congress amendment my good friend and colleague Senator INHOFE has just submitted regarding Presidential authority over setting American foreign policy. Like all of my colleagues, I have the right to visit foreign countries in

my capacity as a Member of Congress. However, the Constitution is quite clear about the separation of powers between the legislative and executive branches of our government, and the executive branch has the exclusive authority to conduct negotiations with foreign countries.

As we all know, the Logan Act prohibits American citizens from negotiating with foreign governments without the authority of the United States. What would it mean if a Member of the House or Senate, and especially a member of the leadership, was to visit a foreign country and in discussions with their government, explicitly speak out against our Nation's foreign policy agenda? High ranking Members of Congress, I believe, are seen by foreign governments as carrying an official message of foreign policy, and if such members contradict the administration, it can be very damaging to our country politically and diplomatically.

Members of Congress have the ability to express their dissent from the floor of their respective Chambers, but under no circumstances should Members visit with foreign governments for the sole purpose of demonstrating their opposition to the administration's foreign policy. Such actions would show a sincere lack of respect for the boundaries drawn out by our Constitution, and I would hope that all Members of Congress will use good judgment when visiting with foreign governments in the future.

It is a very dangerous precedent to set if Members of Congress decide to buck the American foreign policy agenda and carry mixed messages to foreign governments, especially foreign governments hostile to our country. While I will continue to support congressional rights to travel abroad and meet with government officials, there is a responsibility that comes along with those visits, and that responsibility is to uphold and support the administration's foreign policy agenda.

For this reason I have joined my colleague Senator INHOFE in submitting this amendment. I believe it sends a clear and strong message that Members of Congress have the responsibility to defer to and support the administration on setting our Nation's foreign policy agenda, and under no circumstances should Members blatantly defy our administration for purely political gain.

#### REAL ID ACT

Mr. TESTER. Mr. President, today my home State of Montana becomes the fourth State in the Nation to declare its opposition to the REAL ID Act by enacting binding legislation that opts Montana out of REAL ID. With it, my State is opting out of the onerous regulation, blatant invasion of privacy, and the high cost of compliance that will come from implementing REAL ID.

I congratulate my Governor, Brian Schweitzer, and both houses of the